

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 IO-13 SSM-03 OC-06 CCO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00

AID-05 DHA-02 CPR-01 SAM-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 ORM-02

MCT-01 SCA-01 AF-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /115 W

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O R 241520Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1869

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LE, SY

SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF SARKIS' INAUGURATION ADDRESS

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT SARKIS DELIVERED 35-MINUTE
INAUGURATION ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT, ASSEMBLED AT
CHTAURA, IMMEDIATELY AFTER SWEARING-IN AT
APPROXIMATELY 1315 LOCAL SEPT. 23. ADDRESS BEGAN
WITH INEVITABLE STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTALS, IN
WHICH SARKIS CLEARLY SPOKE AGAINST PARTITION. HE
STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF LEBANESE POLITICAL AND OTHER
REFORMS AND OF GOVERNING PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM AND
EQUALITY. HE GAVE NO HINT OF WHAT HE MIGHT OFFER AS
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REFORM PROGRAM, BUT IMPLICITLY REJECTED

CONFESSIONALISM. NOTABLY ABSENT WERE ANY AFFIRMATIONS OF DEVOTION TO EXISTING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OR THE CONSTITUTION, ALTHOUGH DEVOTION TO DEMOCRACY, LEGALITY AND "THE ESSENCE OF" PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT WERE STRESSED. HE AFFIRMED LEBANESE SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN CAUSE. HE SPOKE OF "SPECIAL RELATIONS" WITH SYRIA, BUT AFFIRMED WHAT SYRIAN MILITARY PRESENCE WAS SUBJECT TO LEBANESE AUTHORITY. HE SPOKE OF SECURITY AS ESSENTIAL PRE-CONDITION TO ANY REFORM. FOLLOWING SUMMATION AND ANALYSIS BASED ON INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION. (WE ASSUME FBIS WILL PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH TEXT. WE WILL POUCH OFFICIAL GOL TEXTS WHEN AVAILABLE.)

2. AGAINST PARTITION. SARKIS ASSERTED HIS BELIEF IN "ONE SINGLE LEBANON" AND THROUGHOUT SPOKE IN TERMS OF "BELIEF IN LEBANON" AND THE "NATIONAL WILL." HE ALLUDED TO THE "MESSAGE WHICH WE (LEBANESE) INHERITED FROM OUR GRANDFATHERS."

3. REFORM. MOST SIGNIFICANT PART OF ADDRESS DEALT WITH NEED FOR REFORM. SARKIS SAID THAT, APART FROM FOUNDATIONS OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, "NOTHING IS SACRED" IN EXISTING LEBANESE LEGISLATION. WITHOUT SPECIFICS, SARKIS CRITICIZED PAST POLITICAL POSTURES WHICH "HAD FROZEN INSTEAD OF DEVELOPING." HE WOULD CREATE A "NEW STATE," AND SAID IT IS MATTER OF "URGENT NECESSITY TO RECONSIDER THE BASES AND METHODS OF GOVERNMENT." "THE DOOR OF CHANGE IS OPEN IN ALL FIELDS, PARTICULARLY THE POLITICAL FIELD." HE SAID HE WOULD SPONSOR REFORMS TO DEVELOP COHESION, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY AMONG LEBANESE. HE SPOKE IN FAVOR OF "SOCIAL BALANCE," EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, AND ADVANCEMENT ON BASIS OF QUALIFICATION. HE SAID HE LOOKED TO DAY WHEN LEBANESE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES ONLY ON BASIS OF CULTURE, EDUCATION, MORALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY, BUT DID NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESS QUESTION OF CONFESSIONALISM. HE STATED HIS ATTACHMENT TO THE PRINCIPLE OF LEGALITY AND PRESERVATION OF "THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ESSENCE OF" FREE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM, THE REBY LEAVING DOOR OPEN TO (UNSPECIFIED) CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE BUT WOULD EXPAND PUBLIC ECONOMIC SECTOR IF REQUIRED BY THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

4. SECURITY A PRE-CONDITION. SARKIS SAID NO POLICIES FOR FUTURE WERE POSSIBLE WITHOUT CESSATION OF FIGHTING

AND RETURN TO POLITICAL DIALOGUE. HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ARMY TO "MAKE IT A SOLID FORCE WORKING FOR ONE NATION."

5. PALESTINIAN ISSUE. SARKIS SAID HE IS "DETERMINED TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT HARMING THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE." HE SAID THE "PALESTINIAN CAUSE IS THE CAUSE OF LEBANON AS IT IS THE CAUSE OF EVERY ARAB COUNTRY." LEBANON, HE SAID, "HAS SPARED NO EFFORT OR NUACRIFICE TO PLAY ITS ROLE IN CONFRONTING THE ISRAELI DANGER AND HELPING THE PALESTINIANS RECOVER THEIR LAND."

6. SYRIAN PRESENCE. SARKIS SPOKE OF "SPECIAL RELATIONS" WITH SYRIA, BUT SAID THAT SYRIAN MILITARY PRESENCE IS "SUBJECT TO THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES, WHO HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE TOWARDS IT THE ATTITUDES WHICH THEY DEEM COMPATIBLE WITH THE SUPREME LEBANESE INTEREST IN THE LIGHT OF EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES."

7. AS OF NOON SEPT 24, NO MAJOR LEBANESE POLITICAL FIGURES HAD COMMENTED ON FIRST MAJOR DECLARATION OF SARKIS' PRESIDENCY.
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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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